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MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND.



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MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE



“ ‘ I—I—am burning my—my poetry ’ ”

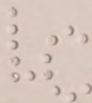
Miss Appolina's Choice

BY

ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND

With Illustrations by

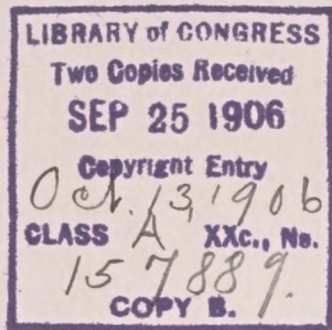
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE MIDDLETON BOWL

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INTRODUCING A POETESS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING A POETESS

THE house was one of a long row of brownstone houses which line many of New York's streets, and in an upper room of one of them two girls were sitting one fine afternoon in early April.

"The girls" were Millicent and Joanna Reid.

Millicent was nearly seventeen, and with her cousin Peggy, who lived across the street, studied with a governess and various masters; but Joanna, or Joan, as she was frequently called, went to school. She had just burst into the room, and flinging a pile of school books upon the table with a resounding crash, had seated herself in an easy chair and was pulling off her gloves.

"It is to be on the 30th of April, and we are

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all asked to send just as much as we can, and Mrs. Pearson said anything would do," said she.

"Oh, don't, Joan!" exclaimed Millicent, who had a pencil in her hand and had hastily thrust a morocco-bound book under the sofa pillow when her sister entered. "You do startle me so! What is to be on the 30th of April?"

"The fair, of course. Now don't pretend you don't know anything about it, when the Pearsons have talked of nothing else for weeks."

"I have had other things to think of," returned Millicent, with dignity.

"For one thing, I am wondering which of us three Cousin Appolina will take with her to England. If she would only choose me! And then—oh, there are other things!" And she nibbled the end of her pencil.

Millicent was Joanna's only sister, and she had beautiful golden hair, large blue eyes, and poetic tendencies. Joan was very sure that the morocco-bound book, of which she had

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“Joan gazed at her sister with pride and admiration”

caught a glimpse more than once when it was thrust away just as it had been this afternoon, contained poems—actual poems.

Joan gazed at her sister, as she lay back

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among the cushions, with pride and admiration not wholly unmixed with envy. She would so love to write poetry herself, but next best to that was having a sister who could do it. She only wished that Milly would allow her to see something that she had written. She could then assure her cousin, Peggy Reid, with absolute knowledge of the fact that her sister was a poetess. Now she could only darkly hint upon the subject, and it was not altogether satisfactory, for she felt confident that Peggy would not believe her.

But at present the fair was the all-absorbing topic, and Joanna returned to the charge.

"We shall have to send something, Milly, for Mrs. Pearson said she depended upon us, and it is such a good object she said she knew we would help her all we could. It is to furnish the new chapel, you know; to get a lecl-luck—something for them to read the Bible on. What is it, Milly?"

"A 'lectern,' I suppose you mean."

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“Yes, that ’s it—‘lectern;’ and a big Bible to put on it, and lots of Prayer-books and Hymnals to stick around the church, and some vases for flowers, and a brass cross, and footstools, and lots of other things they need. Mrs. Pearson said we must try to send as many fancy articles as we could to the fair, and try to sell some tickets.”

“I have no time to make anything, and besides, I don’t do any fancy work,” said Millicent; “and if you don’t mind, Joan, I wish you would go, I am very busy just now.”

“You don’t look very busy. What are you doing? Nothing but biting a pencil. I wish you would tell me what you were doing when I came in, Mill.”

“If you only would not call me ‘Mill’ or ‘Milly!’ I simply detest it. As long as I have a good name, I do wish I could be called by it.”

“I promise and vow I will always call you Millicent, full length, if you will only tell me what you were doing when I came in.”

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"I can't, Joan. Do go away. It was—nothing of any importance."

"Oh, Milly—I mean Millicent—please, please tell me! I do so want to know, and I am only your own little sister, who never did you any harm, and who wants to know so much. Won't you tell me?"

Joanna had slipped down on the floor at her sister's side. One arm she threw across Millicent, the other went under the sofa pillow. In a moment the morocco blank-book was in her hand. She clutched it tightly. If she only dared draw it out, run away with it, and read it! Peggy would have done it without any hesitation whatever, but then Joanna was not Peggy.

Millicent looked at her pensively. Sympathy is pleasant, particularly to a poet, and she felt sure that Joan, if any one, would appreciate some of the beauties of her verse.

"I really believe I will," she said at length; "only, Joan, I don't want Peggy to know any—"



“ ‘ Oh, Milly ! please, please tell me ’ ”

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thing about it. Peggy does laugh so at everything. Not that there is anything to laugh at in these little poems of mine—for they are real poems, Joan. Do you know I actually write poetry? Did you ever have any idea of it?”

“I am not a bit surprised,” declared Joan. “In fact, I was almost sure of it. I am so glad you are going to let me see them. They are in this book, are n’t they? Oh, Milly—I mean Millicent—think of your being a poetess! Do hurry up. Shall I read them myself, or will you read them to me?”

“I will read them aloud. I can do it with more expression, probably, for I know just where to put the emphasis. I often think that if I could only take them myself to the editors of the magazines and read the poems to them, they would be more apt to accept them.”

“Of course they would. But do you mean to say, Millicent, that you have really sent anything to the magazines?”

“Certainly I have. I want recognition, but somehow they don’t seem to suit.”

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"How hateful!" exclaimed Joan, with a sympathy that warmed her sister's heart. "But do hurry up and read them. I am dying to hear what you have written."

Millicent opened the book and turned over the pages. She could not quite decide which she should choose as her first selection. Before she had made it, however, there was a tap at the door, and then, without waiting for a reply, a tall dark-haired girl of sixteen came into the room.

Again the morocco-bound book went under the sofa pillow, and Joanna could not suppress an exclamation of disappointment.

"What 's the matter? What 's up?" said their cousin Peggy, her merry brown eyes glancing quickly from one to the other. "Secrets? Now that is not a bit fair, to have secrets from me. I 've got oceans of things to talk about; but, first of all, I met the postman just as I was coming in, and he gave me this for you, Mill. This huge envelope, and ad-

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“ ‘What’s the matter? What’s up?’ ”

dressed in your own handwriting. It is awfully mysterious, and I am just about wild with curiosity. You must tell me what it is.”

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A blank look came over Millicent's face, but she took the letter and said nothing.

"Oh, come now, are n't you going to tell us?" continued Peggy. "I 'll never tell."

"Do, Millicent!" urged Joanna. "If it 's—if it has anything to do with what we were talking about when Peggy came in you may as well tell. I want Peggy to know about it and I 'm sure she would like to hear them, too."

"Hear them! What in the world is it? Oh, I know! I know!" cried Peggy. "You have been writing and sending things to the magazines! Oh, Milly, do show me!"

Millicent looked at her long and doubtfully. "Will you never, never tell?" she asked at last.

"Never, on my oath!"

"I believe I will tell you, then, for I do think it is the meanest thing in those editors, and I just want to see what they have said this time, and whether they have answered my note or not."

She opened the envelope and drew forth sev-

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eral papers, one of which appeared to be a printed one.

"No, they have n't. They have just sent me the same old slip they always do, thanking me ever so much for sending the poems, and it may not be because they are not good that they are sending them back, but because they have so many things on hand. Oh, dear, I do think they might have answered it!"

"What did you say in your note?" asked Peggy.

"Oh, I told them that I thought these poems were perfectly suited to their magazines and really better than some that they published last month, and so they are. And I asked them to tell me of a good place to send them if they could n't take them. I do think the man might have had the politeness to answer my note, instead of sending me this old printed thing."

"Well, do let us hear the poems," put in Peggy, briskly. "I am wild to know what they are like."

THE POETESS IS TEMPTED

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CHAPTER II

THE POETESS IS TEMPTED

MILLICENT again looked doubtfully at her laughter-loving cousin. But in a moment she took a more upright position upon the sofa, and holding her pretty head a little to one side she remarked:

"This is a little poem on something that is very familiar to us, but I like the idea of idealizing familiar things." Then she paused. "Oh, I don't believe I can read it, after all," she said, in an embarrassed way; "it is very hard to read your own productions."

"Then let me read it!" cried Peggy, attempting to seize the paper.

"No, no! I would rather do it myself than have you," said Millicent; and presently she

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coughed hesitatingly, and began. "It is about the mosquito, and is called 'Lines to a Mosquito:'

"When day is done, and darkness comes shadowing down the way,
And night with her rustling winglets blots out the garish day,
We hear the song of an insect singing its musical lay.

"Oh, insect with wings that flutter! Oh, insect on murder intent!
Oh, creature, we 'd love thee dearly if thou wert not on bloodshed bent!
And we 'd bear with thy visits gladly, we e'en would be content.

"Then cease thy busy prattle, and cease thy dangerous stings,
Learn, learn to be meek and lamblike like other less harmful things,
Till we hail with joy thy coming, thy coming on peaceful wings!"

Here the poem ended, and the reader paused for the applause which she felt to be her due.

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Peggy had turned aside and was leaning her head upon her hand so that Millicent could not see her face. Joan was the first to speak.

"Millicent, how perfectly lovely! Did you really do it all yourself? You are the smartest thing I ever knew. Somehow it reminded me of something else."

"Longfellow, probably," said Millicent. "'When day is done, and darkness comes shadowing down the way,' is suggestive of him."

"All except the 'shadowing,'" said Peggy.

"No; I made that word up," returned Millicent, with complacency. "Poets are obliged to coin words sometimes. What do you think of the poem, Peggy?"

"Wonderful!" replied her cousin, in a stifled voice. "How did you ever happen to think of asking a mosquito to be like a lamb?"

She turned away again, and her shoulders shook convulsively.

"Do read the other!" cried Joan, enthusias-

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tically. "I don't see how you ever make them rhyme so beautifully."

"Oh, that is easy enough," said Millicent, much pleased. "Whenever I don't know just what to put in I look in my rhyming dictionary for a word."

"Rhyming dictionary!" repeated Peggy, at last uncovering a crimson face. "Do poets use rhyming dictionaries?"

"Of course. They are obliged to very often, and it saves so much time and thought, you know. Now this is a sonnet. It is my favorite form of verse. I suppose you both know that a sonnet must be just fourteen lines and no more?"

"Oh, I know," agreed Peggy amiably, "and there are other rules about it, too."

"Well, that one is the most important, about the fourteen lines. I don't pay much attention to the other rules. I think rules hamper you when you are composing."

"Oh!" said Peggy.

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"This is called 'A Sonnet to the Moth Miller,'" continued Millicent:

"Oh, little creature, made so fair, so white,
What seekest thou about my closet door?
To see thee fills no soul with deep delight,
Thy coming almost all men do deplore.
So silent and so fatal is thy task,
We haste to catch thee, bring the camphor
forth.
To kill thee quite stone-dead is all we ask,
Thou little quiet woolen-loving moth!
We crush thee, cast the atoms to the wind,
Stamp underfoot, and tread thee with the
heel.
Oh, tell me! Dost thou really truly mind?
Can little frail white creatures like thee
feel?
What are thy thoughts, and what emotions
thine?
To know thy feelings, dear white moth, I
pine!"

When Millicent's pathetic voice ceased there was silence in the room for a moment, and

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then from the table upon which Peggy's head was resting came peal after peal of laughter.

"Oh, do excuse me, Milly!" she cried, as soon as she could speak. "I did n't mean to laugh, but it struck me as so awfully funny, don't you know. 'About your closet door,' and bringing the—the—camphor forth; oh! oh! moth-balls are better, and you might have put in something about the smell! Ha, ha, ha!" and Peggy fairly shrieked with laughter as she held her side and rocked to and fro. "Oh, do excuse me! But—but—I can't h—help it! It 's—the funniest thing I ever heard! At least it is n't really, but it just struck me so, and—and if you can tread a moth under your—your heel, you 're terribly smart. Oh, Mill, Mill!"

"There!" said Millicent, rising and thrusting her papers into a drawer in her desk, and turning the key with an angry snap. "I knew just how it would be. I believe you would laugh at my funeral."

"Oh, no, indeed I would n't, Milly—not at

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“ Peggy rocked to and fro ”

your funeral. But really, you know, it just struck me I think the rhymes are perfectly splendid, don't you, Joan?”

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"Indeed I do!" cried Joanna; "and I don't see what you found to laugh at. I think they are perfectly beautiful, Millicent. Are n't you going to read some more?"

"No, indeed, never!"

"I wish you would write a poem about Cousin Appolina," said Peggy. "Hateful thing! She might take at least one of us abroad with her, if not all three. She has such loads of money, and no one to spend it on but herself."

"Probably she will take one of us," observed Joan.

"It won't be me, then," said her cousin positively but ungrammatically; "she hates me like fury. It will be one of you. Well, it would n't be much fun to dance attendance on Cousin Appolina if she should happen to have a cranky fit. Mill, I know you are mad, for you have n't spoken a word since I laughed. Do forgive me and tell me, what are you going to send to the fair?"

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"I have nothing to send," replied Millicent, rather shortly.

"Send your poems! Brilliant idea!" exclaimed the incorrigible Peggy. "Have them printed on separate slips of paper, and sign some queer name, and say a member of the congregation wrote them, and see how they take."

"I don't care to have you make any more fun of me and my writings," said Millicent, with great dignity.

"No fun, honor bright! Only I wish you would put in one about Cousin Appolina Briggs. If you don't, I believe I will. You could lend me your rhyming dictionary to do it with, and I believe I could write a poem as well as—anybody. But have n't you got anything on hand that you don't want, in the way of fancy work, that you might send?"

"I have those worsted slippers Cousin Appolina gave me for Christmas. They are in the box, just as she sent them."

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"The very thing! Who wants her old worsted slippers? And fairs are always full of such things. And you will have your poems printed and send them, won't you, dear child?"

Her cousin did not see the gleam of mischief that came into Peggy's eyes as she said this. Millicent was pondering the situation too deeply. Peggy had not dreamed until now that she would take the proposition seriously.

"I believe I will," said the poetess, after some minutes' pause, interrupted only by the admiring Joanna, who urged her sister to act upon Peggy's suggestion. "It would give me the recognition I want. They can be sold at five cents a copy, and if I see people buying them, I shall know that they are liked, and then some day I might have them published in a book. Thank you ever so much, Peggy, for thinking of it. I will sign them 'Pearl Proctor,' just as I do those that I send to the magazines, and no one will ever know who it is. I will have them typewritten on attractive paper,

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and I will send Cousin Appolina's shoes. She won't be home from Washington until after the fair, and she will never know. They had better be doing some good."

"She would n't recognize them anyhow," remarked Peggy; "she is so nearsighted that even that gold lorgnette would n't discover her own stitches. Well, good-by, girls, I am going."

Unknown to her cousins, Peggy slipped away with the rhyming dictionary under her arm. She had discovered it on the table and the opportunity was too good to be wasted.

She crossed the street to her own home and retired to her room, whence she did not emerge for an hour or more. At dinner that night her family, had they looked at her with attention, might have discovered an additional expression of mischief in her eyes and a satisfied look upon her face. But fortunately one's family are not apt to notice.

"If I thought there was the least chance of

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Cousin Appolina's choosing me to go abroad, I might not run the risk," she said to herself; "but she would n't take me on any account. Besides, she 'll never hear of this, and it will be such fun to paralyze Milly. Just fancy her taking me in earnest, and sending her poems to the fair! Oh, oh! What a dear old innocent she is! It is a shame to tease her, but I just can't help it. Pearl Proctor! Pearl Proctor! what naughty deed is about to be perpetrated in thy name!"

COUSIN APPOLINA BRIGGS

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CHAPTER III

COUSIN APPOLINA BRIGGS

MISS APPOLINA BRIGGS was somewhat of a power in the Reid family. She was a cousin of the fathers of Millicent, Joanna and Peggy, their fathers being brothers, and for many years when they were boys she had made her home with their parents. She now, however, had a house of her own.

She was very wealthy, very aristocratic, and very eccentric. Kind-hearted and charitable, she preferred to do good in her own way only.

A month or two ago Miss Briggs had informed her relatives that she intended to pass the summer in England, and that it was barely possible that she would ask one of her young cousins to accompany her. Which should be

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the fortunate one she should not decide until a week before the date fixed for sailing. That would be time enough, she said, for no preparations would be necessary. All the girl's wants could be supplied on the other side.

This proposition sounded very attractive, for Cousin Appolina was generous even though she was so peculiar, and there was no doubt that in addition to having the pleasure of the trip a well-stocked wardrobe would fall to the share of the lucky recipient of her favor.

As Peggy had said, there was not much probability that she would be the one honored. She had a habit of making all sorts of speeches in Miss Briggs's presence which did not please the good lady at all. And yet no one knew. It would be just like Cousin Appolina's unexpectedness if she were to veer suddenly around and decree that Margaret, as she always called her, should be the one to go to England.

Consequently suspense and excitement ran high in the Reid family, and in the intervals of

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study, fair work, and poetry-making there was much discussion as to which of the three should be Miss Appolina's choice.

She herself had gone to Washington for a few weeks, and the family breathed more easily for a time. When so much depended upon it the girls were greatly afraid of doing something to offend their cousin, which might very easily happen, and in that case she would sail alone with her maid.

In the meantime preparations for the fair continued, and at last the day arrived. Millicent, having convinced herself that this would be the best means of securing the recognition of her powers as a poetess that she wanted, the recognition which had hitherto been denied her by unfeeling editors, had been reeling off verses by the yard.

Each poem had been printed in the form of a little fancy booklet, at considerable expense to the author, it is true, but the girls had plenty of pocket money, and Millicent had

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eased her conscience with the thought that her object was charity as well as recognition, and each copy that was sold would bring in twenty-five cents to the fair. She had raised the price since the poems came home—she had no idea that they would look so attractive, she said. They would be sure to sell.

Peggy had helped her with a readiness that would have appeared suspicious if Millicent had not been too much absorbed in sentiment to notice it. She had accompanied her cousin to make arrangements for having the poems printed, and had inspected them on their return, and now the morning upon which the fair was to open she offered to carry the box which contained them to an office in the neighborhood, and have them sent to Sherry's, where the fair was to be held, by a district telegraph boy.

"It is much better than ringing for a messenger boy to come to the house," she said, "for then no one can find out in any way who

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'Pearl Proctor' is. I shall be on hand when the box arrives so that I can hear what people



"Millicent had been reeling off verses by the yard "

say, but you had better not come until afterwards, Mill, for your face would be sure to give it away."

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The fancy articles, including Miss Briggs's slippers, had already been sent.

Joanna went to school, longing for the morning to pass that she might get to the fair herself. She and one of her friends were to manage the "fish pond," while Millicent was to be an aid at the flower-table, and Peggy would assist in selling some of the fancy articles.

Peggy left the package at the office, and then hailed a car, that she might not fail to reach the fair in time to witness its arrival. She looked forward to having some rare sport. She only wished she could take some one into her confidence, for it is always so much more fun to laugh with a comrade than to laugh alone. However, a laugh is valuable at any time.

So thought Miss Peggy as she made her way along Thirty-seventh street in her new spring hat and gown, her eyes dancing with anticipation.

The poem on Cousin Appolina had been



"Peggy managed to be near the door"

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tucked into the box along with the rest, but very much underneath. In that way Peggy felt confident that it would escape observation at the fair, and yet be among the poems to give Millicent a shock when they came back.

“For of course no one is going to buy those silly things,” said Peggy to herself; “and I hope it will be a good lesson to Milly. Such conceit as hers in regard to that poetry I never saw, and it ought to be taken down.”

She found the rooms in a state of disorder. Various fashionable dames who had the fair in charge were running about in a vain attempt to bring some degree of order out of the confusion, and Peggy's coming was hailed with delight.

“Oh, Peggy Reid! Just the person I want. Peggy, dear, do hold the end of this scarf while I fasten it here.”

“Peggy, just see if you can find the tack-hammer.”

“Peggy, you have just come, and can see

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things with a fresh eye. Tell me the effect of this drapery."

But notwithstanding all these calls upon her, Peggy managed to be conveniently near the door when a messenger boy appeared, bearing a box addressed in a printed hand to Mrs. Pearson, who had charge of the fair. Peggy took the box, dismissed the boy hastily, and carried it to Mrs. Pearson.

"Something else! Oh, do open it, Peggy! I am so busy," exclaimed that lady, precisely as Peggy had hoped she would do. She opened the box—that which she herself had so carefully tied up not long before.

On the top lay a typewritten card which read: "Sent by one of the congregation, who hopes that they may bring twenty-five cents apiece." Beneath were a number of little booklets.

"Why, Mrs. Pearson, do look! Somebody has sent some poems to sell," cried Peggy, in tones of great surprise. "A member of the

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congregation, and they are signed 'Pearl Proctor!' Who in the world can it be?"

Several people gathered about.

"How very funny! One of the congregation? Who do you suppose it is? I wish I had time to read them," said Mrs. Pearson. "They are certainly a novelty at a fair. Twenty-five cents she values them at? The lady is modest. But take care, girls," she added, in a warning whisper, approaching two young women who were laughing immoderately over one of Pearl Proctor's productions, "you must be careful. No one knows who wrote them, and the person may be in the room watching us at this very minute. It will never do to hurt her feelings."

"Oh, but, Mrs. Pearson, if you could only read this! It is the funniest thing I ever read, and the best part of it is, it is n't meant to be at all."

"Never mind, don't laugh, I beg of you. How did they get here, Peggy?"

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"A messenger boy brought them," returned Peggy promptly, feeling very glad that Millicent was not there to see the effect they produced. She was almost sorry that she had urged her to send them. After all it seemed a shame to make fun of the poor dear.

"Well, do be careful, girls," said Mrs. Pearson, as she moved away.

An hour or so later Millicent herself walked into the rooms. She looked very lovely, for her beautiful golden hair had twisted into little curls and waves, the morning being somewhat damp, and there was an unusual sparkle in her dreamy blue eyes. It was very exciting to have one's poems actually for sale.

The first thing that met her gaze was a large sign placed above a small table. Upon the table lay the array of booklets, while the sign read thus:

A NOVELTY!
POEMS BY PEARL PROCTOR,
A Member of the Congregation.
Twenty-five Cents Each.

She did not have sufficient courage to walk



“ ‘ Well, do be careful, girls ’ ”

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

boldly up with the air of a stranger and inspect the wares thus offered for sale, so she turned aside and began to talk to some of her friends, asking what she could do to help.

"My dear," said Elsie Pearson, flying up to her, and speaking in a whisper, "I am so glad you have come! I must tell you the greatest joke in the world. Somebody has sent a lot of poems to the fair to sell! Did you ever hear of anything so delicious? Mamma says we ought not to laugh, for the person who wrote them may be in the room, but it is too awfully funny not to laugh the least bit, and I know you are safe."

Millicent smiled stiffly. "Are they funny poems?" she asked. "You seem to find them amusing."

Elsie would have noticed her tone if she had not been so excited and in such haste.

"They are not meant to be," she said aloud, as she moved away. "That is the best part of the whole thing."

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Millicent, left alone, felt as if she could cry with pleasure. How perfectly outrageous it was in that odious Elsie Pearson to talk in such a way! The only comfort was that Elsie was anything but intellectual, and would not know good poetry when she saw it. She would probably fail to see any beauty in Tennyson.

Peggy had watched this conference from across the room, and she now came quickly over to her cousin. "Look out, Mill," she said in a low tone, "you will have to be awfully careful that no one catches on. If I were you I would n't stay so near the poetry table."

Peggy, already deeply regretting her joke, wished to spare her cousin as much as possible. But her good intentions were frustrated by Mrs. Pearson.

"Millicent," said that lady, "we have had some new wares sent in; something I never saw before at a fair. Poems, my dear. Just think of it; and by a member of the congre-

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gation! We can't imagine who wrote them, and of course they are perfect trash" (this in a



“ ‘Look out, Mill,’ she said in a low tone ”

low voice), “but we will have to do our best to sell them, so I want you to take charge of that table. You won't mind changing, I know.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

And try not to let the people laugh at the poems. They are absurd, I know, judging from one I picked up. It was about a moth or an ant or something. I am not sure that it was not a Croton bug," and with a laugh at her own wit Mrs. Pearson led Millicent to the poetry table, and established her behind it.

A DAME OF HIGH DEGREE

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

CHAPTER IV

A DAME OF HIGH DEGREE

IT was now twelve o'clock, the hour at which the fair was to be opened to the public.

Two or three hours later the sale was in full swing. A great many people came, for it was in every respect a fashionable function, and it was considered quite the thing to be seen there. People bought quite largely also of every variety of article—except poetry. That seemed to go a-begging.

There was always a crowd about the table, but no one felt inclined to purchase. The little booklets were picked up, read, dropped again with laughter and comments, until Millicent felt that she would gladly sink through the floor.

Even her own mother came, criticised, and

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

moved on, with a whispered question to Millicent as to what member of the congregation could have been so conceited and so senseless as to do such a thing as this.

Millicent's head ached, and tears filled her eyes, and she thought the climax had been reached when Elsie Pearson, picking one up at random, said, laughingly:

"Just listen to this, Milly! It is the gem of the whole collection. I can't help it if the 'member of the congregation' does see me. She deserves to be made fun of." And Elsie in a whisper read the following:

"TO THE MARCH WIND.

"Loud and shrill, loud and shrill,
List to the wild March wind!
And the heart of the mariner trembles
As he sails his rudder behind."

"My dear, the 'member' is a little mixed! Does she mean the mariner sails behind the rudder, or the rudder sails behind the mari-

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

ner? Did you ever, Millicent? I don't believe she knows which part of a ship the rudder is. And this is the second verse:

“ ‘And the bell on the bleak beach bellows,
(There 's alliteration for you. Fancy a bell
bellowing!)

And the fog-horn lifts its voice,
And the mariner goes to an early grave,
He has no other choice.’

“Oh, Milly! is n't it funny! Why don't you laugh?”

“I am laughing,” said Millicent in a hoarse voice; “it makes me perfectly hysterical,” and she hid her face for a moment in her handkerchief. Fortunately Elsie was at that moment called away.

Millicent found to her cost, as the afternoon wore on, that the climax had not been reached even then.

Joanna had come late to the fair, detained by

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

school and luncheon until four o'clock. She had found no one at home, not even her mother, but she had heard from the maid a piece of news which caused her heart to bound with excitement and consternation.

Cousin Appolina had returned very unexpectedly from Washington.

Joanna decided that she must tell Millicent as soon as she reached the fair, so that the slippers might be removed at once. It would be better to be on the safe side, although it was extremely improbable that Cousin Appolina would visit the fair the first day of her return.

But just as Joanna came out of the front door Miss Briggs herself drove up in her carriage and learning that no one was at home in either of her relatives' houses, but that all had gone to the fair, concluded to betake herself there also, and forthwith invited Joanna to get in and drive with her to Sherry's.

Joanna, nothing loath, accepted the invitation, feeling rather glad on the whole that her

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

cousin had returned in time, for she would be sure to spend her money freely, and Joan was greatly interested in the success of the sale. And, alas! she forgot all about the worsted slippers!

They presented their tickets, and entered the room just as Millicent had buried her face in her handkerchief upon hearing the remarks of Elsie Pearson. When she emerged therefrom the first thing that met her astonished gaze was the tall and never-to-be-forgotten form of Cousin Appolina Briggs, and her heart sank with apprehension. For a moment the works of her unappreciated genius were forgotten. Her one thought was "slippers!"

"Oh, that I had never sent those horrible slippers!" she said to herself despairingly. "It will be just my luck to have her see them, and would serve me right, too, for having given away a present. Yes, she is going that way! Oh, if I could only make Peggy or Joan come here! They could go and buy the slippers before she gets there."

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

But Peggy and Joan were not forthcoming. The latter, full of business, had lost no time in retiring behind the screen which formed the "fish-pond," and was already baiting the hook with ardor and queerly shaped packages, and Peggy had not yet seen her cousin, and supposed her to be safe in Washington.

But Miss Briggs was not one to remain long unnoticed. She was of commanding height and noble breadth. When she entered a room the rest of humanity seemed to grow smaller by comparison. Her voice was deep and had a penetrating quality which caused it to be heard at an unusual distance, and the gold lorgnette, without which she was never seen, and which she was in the habit of raising constantly to her short-sighted and somewhat prominent eyes, flashed and glittered in the light.

Truly Miss Appolina's was a presence calculated to make itself felt. And Peggy felt it, and she heard the voice, and a tremor that



"The first thing that met her gaze"

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

seemed like fear filled her naturally courageous heart. She looked at Cousin Appolina, and she looked at the poetry table. There was yet time. Leaving abruptly a customer who was on the verge of making an important purchase, who only needed a word of advice from Miss Peggy Reid as to which was the prettier, a centre-piece embroidered in yellow or a table-cloth done in greens, she flew to the side of Millicent.

"The poems!" she gasped. "Have any of them been sold?"

"Not one," said Millicent; "but oh, Peggy; there is Cousin Appolina!"

"I know," returned Peggy breathlessly, as she turned over the booklets, "I know! That's just it!"

"But the slippers, Peggy! Go and get them. I don't dare."

"The slippers! They are nothing to the poetry. Oh, where is it?"

And she tossed the poems hither and thither, looking first into one, then into another.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"Oh, where is it?"

"What do you mean, Peggy? Don't waste time over the poetry. Do please go and buy those slippers! Give any price. There, she is getting to that table now! It is too late!"

There was a lull in the noise at that moment, and Miss Briggs's clear deep tones could be distinctly heard by the two culprits.

"I want a pair of knit slippers. I make a great many myself, but I never seem to have any for my own use. How much are these red and gray ones? A dollar and a half? Give them to me, please, and never mind about the change. I have not examined them thoroughly, but if they do not suit me I will give them away."

It was too late. She had bought her own slippers. Millicent hoped that the gold lorgnette would be smashed to atoms before the lady reached her home; that her spectacles would lose themselves; even that the world would come to an end before Miss Appolina

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

found an opportunity to examine those red and gray worsted slippers. That she would recog-



“ She tossed the poems hither and thither ”

nize them Millicent felt no doubt, for they were knit in a fashion peculiar to herself, the two colors forming a little plaid.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

Meanwhile Peggy had tossed about the poems with no result. She had only succeeded in bringing to the top those that had hitherto lain in safe insignificance at the bottom.

Now she stood by the table as if turned into stone, and awaited the approach of an avenging fate. The day of practical jokes was over for her.

She knew, she felt absolutely confident, that just as surely as Cousin Appolina had chosen the slippers of her own make, just so surely would she pounce upon the poem that Peggy had written about her.

Miss Briggs drew near.

"Well, girls!" she said, in her great deep voice, the gold lorgnette raised to her eyes, "well, girls, you did not expect to see me back so soon, did you? Washington became insupportable. Too many odious-looking people. I could not endure it. What have we here?" staring at the sign. "'Poems by Pearl Proctor, a member of the congregation.' And who



“ ‘ Well, girls, what have we here ? ’ ”

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

may she be? Proctor—Proctor? I don't remember the name in New York. Proctor is a Boston name. Who is it, Millicent?"

Millicent trembled.

"I—I—" she faltered.

"You!" thundered her cousin. "Never! What do you mean?"

"Milly did n't mean to say that," interposed Peggy. "She was probably going to say she could n't tell who it is. It is an assumed name, we suppose, Cousin Appolina."

"Is not Millicent capable of speaking for herself?" inquired Miss Briggs, severely. "Since when did she lose the power of speech?"

The girls shook in their shoes and held their peace.

"What are these things?" continued this terrible person, picking up the poems disdainfully, and again putting her lorgnette to her eyes. "'Ode to a Firefly,' 'Sonnet on the Caterpillar,' 'Some Lines to a Beggar Child.' Faugh! Who is the fool that is guilty of all this? But—but—what have we here?"

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

It had come, then! For this is what Miss Appolina read, but not aloud:

“Who is a dame of high degree?
Who ’s always scolded little me?
Who is a sight strange for to see?
Miss Appolina B.

“Who cannot with her friends agree?
Who loves to feed on cakes and tea?
Who prides herself on her pedigree?
Miss Appolina B.

“Who ’ll soon set sail across the sea?
Who will not take her cousins three?
Who is an ancient, awful she?
Miss Appolina B.”

Miss Briggs looked from one to the other of the girls. The hum of the fair went on.

“I will buy all of these poems,” she said in a voice which filled their souls with terror; “count them, and tell me the amount. And I wish to see you both to-morrow morning at ten o’clock.”

Wondering, Millicent obeyed.

Peggy turned and fled.

THE IMPERTINENCE OF IT

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

CHAPTER V

THE IMPERTINENCE OF IT

THE next morning at ten o'clock two frightened and trembling maidens presented themselves at the door of Miss Briggs's house on Madison avenue. It was all out of order, to be sure, for them to be calling at such an hour, for it was the time appointed for their lessons, and yesterday had been a holiday also on account of the fair; but Miss Briggs's word was to a certain extent law in the family, and governesses and masters were asked to defer their coming.

The mothers of Millicent and Peggy had little idea as to why their cousin wished to see them, for neither girl dared to confess her atrocious deed. In fact, Millicent herself did not know of Peggy's poem. Peggy was put-

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

ting off the evil moment as long as possible, when she should be forced to give an account of what she had done.

She was really very much ashamed of herself. She had lain awake half the night thinking of what a rude, unladylike, childish trick she had been guilty.

"From first to last it has been silly," she groaned. "It was perfectly hateful of me to make Milly send her poetry and turn her into a laughing-stock, even though no one knows it was she who wrote them, and it was ridiculous for me to put that one in about Cousin Appolina. And it was n't funny, either. I might have made a better one while I was about it. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I wish I had n't been born a joker! I 'll never get to England now, not for years and years, for papa declares he won't take me himself until I have finished school. And when he hears about this, for of course Cousin Appolina will tell the whole family, what will he say! Oh, oh! Unfortunate wretch that I am!"

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

Thus Peggy. Millicent, in the meantime, across the street, was in a no less unhappy frame of mind.



"Peggy had lain awake half the night"

"What can it be?" said she to herself.
"Cousin Appolina could not have found out

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

then about the slippers, for she seemed to be in a very pleasant mood when she came to the poetry-table. What in the world made her buy all the poems? She must have come upon one that she liked, or one that she did n't like, that made her buy them all. Probably that she did n't like, but which one, I wonder?"

But as I have said, they rang Miss Briggs's door-bell, punctual to the moment. James, the melancholy footman, seemed even more solemn than usual as he ushered them up the stairs to the door of Miss Briggs's library.

"Miss Reid and Miss Margaret Reid," he announced, in a sepulchral voice, and withdrew, leaving them to their fate.

Miss Briggs sat at her desk writing. She gave the girls a cold good-morning, and motioned them to be seated. She continued to write, and her quill pen travelled briskly across the page, scratching loudly. Millicent's heart sank. The slippers were placed in reproachful prominence upon the top of the desk. The poems were not to be seen.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

After some minutes' silence, broken only by a deep-drawn sigh from Milly, a warning cough from Peggy, and the scratching of the quill, Miss Briggs turned in her chair and faced them. She removed the spectacles which she had worn when writing, and raised her lorgnette. The girls thought that no stern judge in the days of witchcraft could have appeared more formidable. She scrutinized them piercingly, coldly, judicially. Then she spoke.

"I have asked you to come to me, young ladies, that some small matters may be cleared up. Who wrote that poetry?" It was not the slippers entirely, then. It was "To a Pearl in an Oyster-shell;" and Peggy would go to England. Millicent's eyes were on the ground, the color came and went in her cheeks, her head drooped.

"I did," she faltered.

"Just as I thought. No one but you, you silly scrap of sentiment, would be guilty of writing such trash. It is now consigned to its

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

proper destination;" and she pointed to a large scrap-basket which the girls had not before noticed, and which was filled to overflowing with the ill-fated booklets. "I have looked through them all, and find nothing but harmless trash, with one exception. As you may suppose, it is this one;" and from under some papers on her desk she drew another.

"I suppose it is the sonnet to 'A Pearl in an Oyster-shell,' " gasped Millicent. "I am sorry, Cousin Appolina, that it went in. I—"

"Pearl in an oyster-shell! Nonsense! What do I care about pearls in oyster-shells? Do not try any of those evasions with me; they are of no use. I am shocked, pained, astonished that one of my own kith and kin, the daughter of my Cousin Van Aspinwall Reid, should have been guilty of such—such—well, words fail me!—such gross impertinence!"

Millicent forgot her misery, and stared at Miss Briggs in astonishment. "I don't know what you mean, Cousin Appolina, unless it is the slippers."

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE



“ Overflowing with the ill-fated booklets ”

“Slippers! Yes, you may well allude to the slippers, but the next time you send my gifts to be sold pray be more careful. I drew one of

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

them on my foot this morning and felt the crunch of paper in the toe. I examined the paper, and found it to be this."

Miss Appolina rose and held a small white card toward Millicent. This is what was written upon it:

"'For Millicent, with love and good wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, from her cousin, Appolina Briggs.'

"I notice that the check which I sent with the slippers was carefully removed. That did not go to the fair," added Miss Briggs, grimly, as she again seated herself.

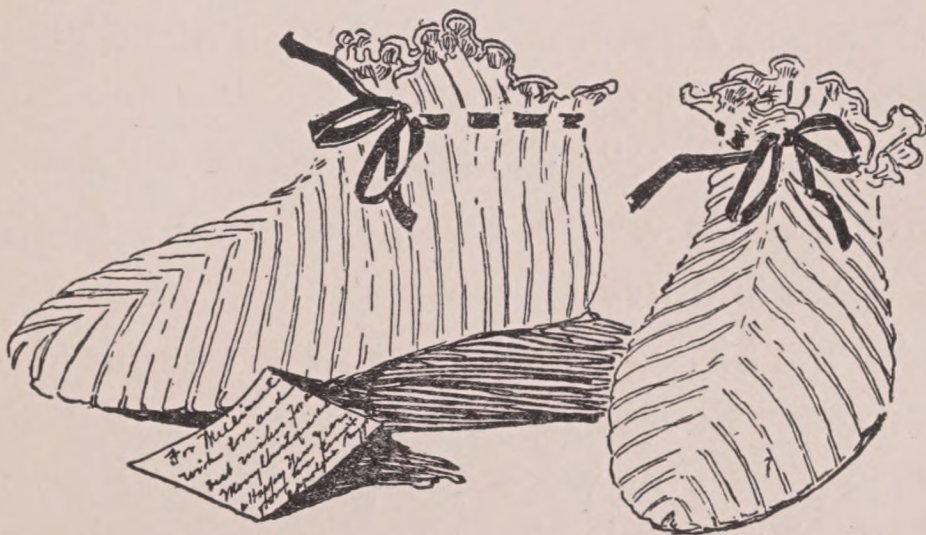
Millicent burst into tears. All this time Peggy's mind was busy. A terrible temptation stared her in the face. No one seemed to suspect her of having written the lines about her cousin; if she did not confess it, who would know it?

After all, it would do no further harm to Millicent's prospects if Cousin Appolina continued to think that she wrote them, for she

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

would not be chosen to go to England now under any circumstances on account of the slippers.

Should Peggy remain quiet and let it pass? Not a creature but herself knew what she had done, and it would be easy enough to continue to hide it.



"From her cousin, Appolina Briggs "

"Cousin Appolina," said Millicent, finding her voice at last, "I am sorry! You see, I had n't worn the slippers, for the ones you gave me before are still as good as new, and I had nothing to send to the fair, for I don't do any

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

fancy work, and I thought—perhaps—you would n't mind. I did n't notice the paper."

"Evidently not; but what if the shoes had fallen into other hands than mine? What if— But all this amounts to nothing compared with your positive outrageousness in writing those lines about me and sending them to be sold."

"Cousin Appolina, what do you mean?" cried Millicent. "I did n't mean you."

"Mean me?" repeated Miss Briggs, in wrath. "To whom, then, were you referring? Is there another Miss Appolina B.?"

"I can't imagine what you are talking about, honestly, Cousin Appolina, but I really did not mean that you were the pearl in the oyster-shell. I wrote it about some one else."

"Pearl in the oyster-shell! Do not dare to mention that pearl or that oyster-shell again. I am tired of hearing of them both. And do not pretend that you do not understand me, Millicent. You are not so stupid as all that, though I must say you were extraordinarily

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

dull of comprehension when you sent those verses to the fair, and it was astonishingly like you to do it, too. No, this is what I am referring to. Now, what have you to say for yourself?"

She thrust the unlucky booklet at her cousin, and began to walk the floor.

Millicent read the verses:

"Who is a dame of high degree?
Who 's always scolded little me?
Who is a sight strange for to see?
Miss Appolina B.

"Who cannot with her friends agree?
Who loves to feed on cakes and tea?
Who prides herself on her pedigree?
Miss Appolina B.

"Who 'll soon set sail across the sea?
Who will not take her cousins three?
Who is an ancient, awful she?
Miss Appolina B."

"Who else would have written that about

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

the 'cousins three?' " thundered Miss Briggs, as she walked. "And, besides, you have already confessed that you are the author of the rhymes. What more is needed? As for my pedigree, is there a better one in all New York? I may be ancient and I may be awful, but at least I am aristocratic. Cakes and tea forsooth! You have had the last cakes and tea you will ever have in my house. Margaret—I have decided that you shall be the one to go abroad with me. I have made up my mind to that, now that Millicent has confessed that she wrote the poetry. Yesterday I was in doubt as to which one of you had written it, so I requested you both to come to me, but in the meantime I have read the other poems, and even before Millicent acknowledged it, I knew that they had emanated from no pen but her's! No one else could have been capable of such trash. We will sail, Margaret, on the 1st of June."

Still Peggy held her peace. She would wait

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

and see what Millicent said. Millicent, too, was silent. At first her astonishment upon reading the verses deprived her of the power of speech. Who in the world could have written them, and how did they get among her poems at the fair? She felt stupefied; but slowly a glimmering of the truth dawned upon her.

She knew that the author of the lines was either her sister or her cousin.

It did not seem like Joan to do it, and yet it was not possible that it could have been Peggy or she would boldly confess it now. It must be Joanna. Whichever it was, Millicent would not speak. The innocent had suffered for the guilty before this. There was no chance whatever of her being chosen for England on account of the slippers, therefore she would not spoil the prospects of the others. She could suffer for two offences as easily as for one.

She rose, placed the verses upon Miss Briggs's desk, and stood before her relative.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"I am very sorry," she said; "I did not know those verses were there. I—I—apologize with all my heart. May I go now?"

"Yes, you may go, and do not come to the house again until you at least appear to be more ashamed of your conduct. You are absolutely unrepentant, I see. Go! Margaret, my dear, I should be glad to have you stay and talk over our trip."

Millicent left the house feeling as if she were walking in a dream. What could it all mean? Of course it was Joan. What a strange thing for the child to do! And how cleverly she had hidden it!

When she was told of the transaction at the fair, of how Cousin Appolina had bought all the poems, she had only laughed and thought it a good joke, and was glad that Millicent's poetry was appreciated. And she went off to school that morning as light-heartedly as possible. Her last words had been:

"I hope you will get through all right with Cousin Appolina, Milly, darling, and I hope

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

she has n't found out about the slippers, and that you will be the one to go to England."

And yet it must have been Joan, for Peggy would certainly have confessed had it been she.

THE SILENCE OF PEGGY

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

CHAPTER VI

THE SILENCE OF PEGGY

MILLICENT walked slowly homeward. The French teacher was awaiting her, and her singing master was to come directly afterward, but her lessons did not receive very close attention that day.

In the meantime Peggy was left with her cousin.

"I am astonished at Millicent," said Miss Briggs, as the door closed. "I always suspected that she was silly, but I never supposed she could be impertinent. I shall not mention it in the family, Margaret, and I shall be obliged to you if you will not either. I would not for the world have either her father or yours know what—what she has said about me."

L. OF C.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

Still Peggy was strangely silent. She was glad that it was not to be told. She had less compunction about not confessing if the family were not to know it. Now they would merely think it a whim of Cousin Appolina's that she was the one chosen for the voyage.

She did not enter with great heartiness into the plans for the summer, and Miss Briggs soon dismissed her.

"But come in again at five o'clock and have some 'cakes and tea,'" she said, with great meaning. "My poor cakes and tea! Oh, it was outrageous! I shall never pardon Millicent."

So Peggy went home, or rather to her uncle's house, for the girls shared the school-room there. After lessons were over, and they were left alone together, Peggy broke the silence.

"Did you write those lines to Cousin Appolina, Mill?"

"No; of course not, Peggy. It must have been Joan."

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes; and I feel dreadfully about it. Not so much because I will lose the trip, but because she has been so deceitful. I can't understand it. To think, too, of your being the one to go, after all."

"But why did n't you tell Cousin Appolina that you did n't write it?"

"It was n't worth while. I knew it must have been either you or Joan, and I thought if you did it you would say so. If Joan did it—well, Peggy, I did n't want to. I feel dreadfully about Joan's having done it. I shall talk to the child, and— But I can't bear to think she did it, and I would rather have Cousin Appolina think it was I than little Joan."

"You are very generous," said Peggy.

"No, I am not. I should n't be the one to go, anyhow. Of course the whole thing is terribly dishonorable, but I must save Joan."

Peggy said nothing for a long time. Then she asked, "What time does Joan get home to-day?"

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"Not until late, for she is going to lunch with one of the girls, and then to the Dog Show with her."

"Well, I must go home. I 'll see you again before the day is over." And Peggy departed to her own house. "What a good girl Millicent is," she thought. "I have laughed at her and made endless fun of her for her poetry-making, I have thought she was stupid over her lessons, and not half as bright or as much to be admired as myself, and here she is ten times more generous, ten times more honorable, ten times better than I am in every way. I am a wretch, a conceited, deceitful, mean, stuck-up, and everything else that is horrible wretch. But I don't want to give up and tell Cousin Appolina that I did it."

At twenty minutes of five that afternoon Peggy again appeared in Millicent's room. An odor of smoke filled the air, and Milly seemed to be wrestling with the tongs and some burning paper at the fireplace.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"What are you doing?" asked Peggy, much surprised. "Building a fire this warm day?"

"I—I—am burning my—my poetry," replied Millicent, struggling with her tears as well as with the tongs. "I am never going to write another line. Everyone laughed so that I don't believe there is much real poetry in it, and I am never, never going to write again. What a horrid smell that m-morocco c-cover makes!"

Peggy would have laughed had she been in a happier frame of mind. As it was, she said, solemnly: "Open the window and leave the room to air off, Mill. I want you to come out with me. I am going to Cousin Appolina's."

"But I can't go there, Peggy. You know she told me not to come again."

"You must, Milly. You really must. I will be responsible for it. I can't go alone. You must go with me."

Finally Millicent put on her hat, and for the second time that day the two set forth for their cousin's house.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

Miss Briggs was in her drawing-room. The tea tray had just been placed before her, the celebrated cakes reposed in the old silver cake basket conveniently at hand, the man had left the room, when again the Misses Reid were announced.

Miss Briggs looked up and raised her lorgnette.

"You have made a mistake," she said. "I am not at home to Millicent."

"Yes, you are, Cousin Appolina!" cried Peggy, rushing forward and causing a bronze Hermes to totter as she brushed past it, "yes, you are more at home to Milly than you are to me. For she did n't write them, Cousin Appolina. She did n't write the lines about you. I have brought her with me to hear me confess. She is as innocent as—as that piece of statuary. I wrote the verses. I did!"

For a moment there was an alarming silence, but Peggy, having once begun her confession, courageously continued.



“ ‘I did it to frighten Milly’ ”

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"I did it to frighten Milly. I put it in the box, but 'way underneath, for her to see when the poems came home. I thought it would be such fun to watch her when she read it, and found it had been to the fair with the others. Of course it was just my luck to have you find it, but it was a silly, foolish thing to do, just as it was perfectly horrid of me to make Milly send her own verses to the fair. That was my fault, too. I urged her to do it just to get some fun out of it, and I did n't get a bit.

"Then this morning, when you thought Milly had written them all, and she did n't say anything, I thought I would let it pass, for I wanted dreadfully to go to England, and I knew that her chances were over on account of the slippers. Well, I was firm about it for an hour or so, and then I found how generous Milly was to say nothing, and she thought Joan had done it, and was going to scold her, and—oh, well, I don't think it pays to deceive! I never was so unhappy in my life as I have

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

been to-day. Milly, you dear old soul, say you forgive me!"

During this long speech Millicent had time to think the matter over. Her chief feeling was one of thankfulness that it was not Joanna who had done this thing. And Millicent had a sweet nature and never harbored anger very long.

Of course it was a dreadful thing for Peggy to have done, but her cousin knew how dearly she loved a joke, and though it had been wrong for her to deceive Miss Briggs and herself this morning she had not kept it up long, and it was easy to see that she was sorry enough for it now.

So when Peggy asked her to forgive her, Millicent's answer was a warm kiss.

"And have I nothing to forgive?"

It was Miss Briggs who put the question.

"Yes, of course you have, Cousin Appolina! I am terribly sorry that I ever did such a thing. It was rude, impertinent, everything that was

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE



"Waved them a sad farewell "

bad. I hope you will forgive me. Of course it is all true, but I need n't have said it."

"True?"

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"Why, yes. You know you are a dame of high degree, and you have always scolded me, and in your winter bonnet and big fur cape you were—er—well, a sight rather strange for to see. And it is perfectly true you are soon going to set sail across the sea and you won't take us all three, and sometimes, you know, Cousin Appolina, you don't agree very well, especially with me. And you do love cakes and tea, but so do I, so that is n't anything. And you say yourself you pride yourself on your pedigree."

"And no one has a better right. But there is one line that you have left out. You called me an ancient, awful she!"

Peggy paused.

"I know," she said, slowly, "that was dreadful, but—but it is partly true. I suppose you can't truthfully call yourself very young, Cousin Appolina, and sometimes you can be very awful."

Another pause.

MISS APPOLINA'S CHOICE

"You may both go home," said Miss Briggs.
And they went.

On the 1st of June Miss Appolina Briggs sailed for England, accompanied by her maid and by her young cousin, Joanna Reid. And Millicent and Peggy stood on the wharf and waved them a sad farewell.

The End.

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BY

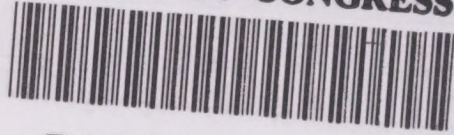
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